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Comment

TRINIDAD COMPROMISE

FOR months past Trinidad has awaited, in anxious suspense, the announcement of a new Constitution. Two years ago a special Committee of the Legislative Council was set up to submit proposals for constitutional reform. It took 18 months to make up its mind, and then produced a Majority Report, a Minority Report and no less than three other dissenting reports. It was left to the Secretary of State to decide between them, and last summer the Colonial Office was visited by groups of Trinidadians each presenting their own point of view. The Secretary of State has now reached his decision. His Despatch is cautious, wise, circumspect, but will hardly satisfy the more ardent spirits in the Caribbean. Mr. Creech Jones was faced with a formidable dilemma. There is the natural desire among progressive people in Trinidad to achieve responsibility in Government—at least to have no less than Jamaica already has. On the other hand there are demagogues and others, who command strong popular support locally, but have no experience in administration and no coherent policies, should they be returned to office. The dilemma is that if the self-government demanded by responsible progressives is granted, it is not they, but the irresponsibles who may ride into power. The new Trinidad Constitution is, therefore, something of a compromise. Five nominated members and three officials will be retained in a Legislative Council of 26 (whereas Jamaica has a fully elected Council); there will be three officials and one nominated member on the Executive together with five elected members—the elected members thus being in a majority, and also being actively associated in administering Government departments. All this is reasonable enough as part of the accepted pattern of colonial

political advance; it is more liberal than what was actually proposed by the Majority Report of Trinidad's own Constitutional Committee. The original difficulty arose, however, through this Special Committee being so constituted as to forfeit the confidence of the progressives, who claimed that it represented the reactionary elements in the island. If a really representative Committee had been set up from the start, its proposals might not have been very different, but they would at least have carried the respect of the people of Trinidad. In spite of possible disappointment at the moment, Trinidad's forward-looking politicians should fix on Mr. Creech Jones' statement that the present changes are 'of a transitional nature . . . designed to bring about the circumstances which would enable responsibility to be assumed without the misgivings which are now felt by many.' It is up to them to see that those misgivings are eliminated.

GLOOM IN CYPRUS

Lord Winster has now resigned the Governorship of Cyprus. His mission, on appointment as Governor, was the framing of a new Constitution; and this mission has failed. The Consultative Assembly, which was appointed to work out the political reforms, has broken down irretrievably, and the country has lapsed into what Lord Winster described as 'senseless political agitation and turmoil.' Internal security has been in jeopardy and there are threats of the use of emergency powers against trouble-makers. It is a peculiarly difficult problem which Cyprus presents. The Cypriots are an advanced, politically-minded people, and they cannot see why Mr. Attlee's famous pronouncement 'we want no unwilling peoples in the British Commonwealth' could not be applied to them, nor why their Consultative Assembly should have been denied the powers to discuss whatever it wanted regarding the future status of their

country even to the point of transferring sovereignty to Greece. Britain might argue that it is not everyone who wants union with Greece that there is a substantial Turkish minority strongly opposed to any such idea. But it is naturally suspected that Britain's own strategic needs lie behind the resistance to any change in sovereignty, and the local Communists are making effective capital out of such arguments. Yet may it not be Russia's strategic needs which really inspire their agitation? Every possible grievance is fomented, and unfortunately there still are many, in spite of the excellent economic plans which have been put in hand, the spectacular eradication of malarial mosquitoes, the irrigation schemes, the afforestation and the many other useful measures which Lord Winster's régime has instituted. There is now no happy prospect before Cyprus. Its own unrest will probably continue—unless put down by forcible means—as long as the tension between the Great Powers continues, for that is the real origin of the present deadlock. In the meantime, it is ironical that the British Parliamentary delegation, which recently presented a Speaker's Chair and mace to the Ceylon Parliament under the happy conditions of the anniversary of Ceylon's independence, should have found, on touching down in Cyprus on its way home, that its presence was seized upon by the Communists to blazon forth yet more loudly their own claims.

HELP FROM AMERICA ?

No immediate results should be expected from the point in President Truman's inaugural address to the Congress, 'We must embark on a new programme for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial programmes available for the improvement and growth of under-developed areas.' It is a far, far cry from such statements, to the actual provision of American capital and skill to colonial countries. Indeed, since President Truman spoke, the American Secretary of State, Mr. Dean Acheson, and the American Ambassador At Large, Mr. Averill Harriman, have both done their best to interpret what exactly the President meant, and it is not easy to understand from their supplementary statements, just how the benefits of American science and industry are to be made available. Here are some sentences from Mr. Acheson's exposition:—

'The President was not announcing a project to be completed within a few weeks or months . . . in almost every country there is some nucleus of skill, some group of people whose technical abilities can be expanded with help from the outside. With all of those people we wish to work. We wish to work through the United Nations and all those organisations which are associate with it. In so far as this programme is successful and in so far as peoples in less developed areas acquire skill, then they

may also create the conditions under which capital may flow into those countries. He did not say this was to be Government capital—if the prior conditions are created the resources of private capital are very great indeed!'

Mr. Harriman added that American scientists were already co-operating with Britain in Colonial Development surveys, and that the Economic Co-operation Administration and the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation were equipped to go right ahead with the President's plans. There is, it is true, a special Overseas Territories Working Group connected with the European Economic Co-operation plans, but no one knows what plans have been agreed upon. That the dependent territories would benefit from American skill and capital is beyond doubt, but it would be far happier if the proposals were put in more concrete terms, and if the Colonial peoples, through their Governments, could examine these terms and have some say in them.

UNHAPPY SOUTH AFRICA

Perhaps no one was really surprised to read of race riots in Durban—the only surprise was that it was against the Indians that the fury of the Africans was directed. There has long been resentment in Natal against the Asiatics, who tend to monopolise trade and transport; but none of the reports from South Africa suggest that the rioting was deliberately planned, or that any definite political organisation was involved in it. It seems rather to have sprung out of a deep sense of frustration, to which any small incident might have given a spark. Well over a hundred people were killed and there were many hundreds of casualties. Durban was described as a 'city of hate,' and only evil is expected to flow from these riots. It is feared that stricter anti-Indian measures will now be taken by the Government; and that the Africans will be depicted as savages, likely to attack the white man next, and therefore necessitating even stricter pass-laws and limitations on movement. Shortly after the riots the new session of Parliament opened, and the measures announced in the Speech from the Throne included the closer association of South-West Africa with the Union (in spite of all U.N.O.'s resolutions!). A Select Committee is now to be set up to work out the means of carrying out the Nationalist policy of segregation. Thus South Africa continues to slide down the slippery slope. We cannot intervene directly, but can we claim an entirely clear conscience? Both before the United Nations—and in some of our official attitudes at home—we have appeared to condone what is at least as morally abhorrent as anything General Franco has done in Spain.

VISIT TO NIGERIA

By Rita Hinden

I HAVE just returned from a month in Nigeria—an extraordinary month, packed to overflowing with interest, excitement and activity. The origin of this trip was unusual and its character remained unusual from start to finish. This was the first time that two British people, who had been interested in African affairs for some time, were invited to visit a Colony as the guests of the Africans themselves. Mr. Reginald Sorensen, M.P., and I were the fortunate recipients of this invitation, which had come to us from the Nigerian Youth Movement, one of the two major political organisations in the country.

The fact that the Youth Movement ('Youth' refers to spirit rather than to years!) is one of two rival political organisations—the other being the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (N.C.N.C.) led by the famous Dr. Azikiwe (commonly known as Zik)—put us in a delicate situation from the outset. The Youth Movement and the N.C.N.C. have, during the last year, been at daggers drawn. It is not that their programmes differ fundamentally, though it might be said that the N.C.N.C. is more violently nationalist, almost to the point of open non-co-operation with the Government. The split has rather been on the question of personalities, it being argued that Zik cannot work in a team and is seen by his followers as a Heaven-sent leader—a state of affairs which alienates other intelligent politicians. Unfortunately the differences between Zik and the Youth Movement have become involved with tribal differences—Zik being an Ibo and drawing his strongest support from the solidly Ibo Eastern Provinces, and the Youth Movement being largely Yoruba, with the centre of their strength in the Yoruba Western Provinces; Lagos, the capital, is said to be pretty evenly divided between the two. Every thoughtful Nigerian regrets the identification of political with tribal differences, but so far the bridge across the widening gap has not been spanned.

The difficulty of our position, as guests of one side, was thus clear to us from the start. We had to weigh the possibly unfortunate interpretations which might be put on our coming to Nigeria identified with one group, as against the equally unfortunate effect of our turning down a generous invitation from Africans—the first time, let it be repeated, that such an invitation had ever been extended to English friends. We decided to accept the invitation, while making it abundantly clear

that we would come as friends of *all* Nigeria, not personally identified with one programme or Party, and considering ourselves free to go where we wished, and say exactly what we wanted. This condition was readily accepted by the Youth Movement, and carried out faithfully in every detail.

But it was inevitable that the N.C.N.C. should not welcome the news of our arrival. A Press campaign was started against us before we set foot in the country, and during our time in Nigeria we experienced the most enthusiastic, at times overwhelming, receptions from the Yorubas, but a certain cool suspicion on the part of the Ibos. We were, however, happy to note that the Zik Press attacks on us were never in any way personal. Our own sincere interest in Nigerian well-being was never called in question, and none of our statements was ever taken exception to, though some general doubts were raised as to whether it was humanly possible for representatives of an imperial nation really to support the desire of a subject people for self-government, when—so it was argued—self-government was bound to be to the economic detriment of the Mother-country! The Press attacks rather took the form of accusing the Youth Movement of being unable to draw up a policy without the help of 'foreign experts,' and of being too much in league with the off-shoots of imperialism. Whenever we met these arguments in personal controversy or at meetings, we did not hesitate to challenge the whole political conception on which they were based—the conception that it is impossible for well-meaning people from Britain and Africa to work together in sincerity. And we stated publicly, a score of times, that we had *not* come to Nigeria for the purpose of constitution-making. We were particularly glad to find ourselves, on the last day before leaving Nigeria, talking frankly and at length with Zik himself, and parting on terms of cordiality.

One would need the length of a book to describe the many exciting—even thrilling—experiences in which we participated. We landed at Kano in the north and spent the first week touring the Northern Provinces—Kano, the ancient walled city with its Moslem Hausa population; romantic Katsina on the edge of the Sahara Desert with its signpost 'to Timbuctoo'; Kaduna, the attractive modern tree-and-flower-lined administrative headquarters of the north; Zaria, where ancient and modern blend with a curious charm; and Jos, cool

and high on the plateau, in whose surrounding villages the Pagan tribes walk in sheer nakedness, their only covering being bunches of bright green leaves, which contrast exquisitely with black skins. Throughout the north one was aware of the firm grip of the Moslem religion; the great strength of the old Moslem Emirates which are the Native Authorities through which the Government works. Among these Moslem Hausas modern political ideas are still in their infancy, although there are now signs of the first stirrings.

Our hosts were the branches of the Nigerian Youth Movement, composed largely of Yorubas from the south who are employed as clerks, teachers, technicians, and Government officials in the northern areas where the local population cannot yet compete for the skilled jobs. In most of these towns we were given magnificent receptions organised by the southerners, and we were able to spend many evenings in the houses of our African friends quietly discussing their problems, which inevitably centred on the difficulties of bringing the north into political association with the south and removing the suspicions still thriving between the different races.

It was like moving to a different world when we flew from Jos to Ibadan, away from the dry treeless uplands into the thick and humid forest belt. We were now in the heart of Yorubaland, with its old 'kingdoms,' still surviving as Native Authorities with considerable powers, its dense population and its under-current of political unrest—directed largely against the old chiefly set-up. In Ibadan we saw the symbol of the future in the new university with its 220 students and its enthusiastic Director, Dr. Mellanby, who has gathered round him a staff of many races and nationalities. In Abeokuta we received a particularly riotous welcome—the whole town apparently being out on holiday. In these parts the women, who carry on the trade, play a peculiarly important role—it was largely through their activities that the Alake (or king) of Abeokuta has just abdicated for alleged mal-administration. Thousands of these women, dressed in gay colours, crowded the streets to greet us, presenting a splendid galaxy of rich hues to eyes accustomed to the half-tones of a northern climate.

In Lagos we were plunged into the thick of public meetings and conference procedure. The Youth Movement was holding its Council, where proposals for the future constitution of Nigeria—promised for 1950—were under discussion. The public meetings were overcrowded and enthusiastic; but the private discussions on the Constitution reached a high and serious level of political understanding. There is to-day in Nigeria an

intelligentsia which understands fully the difficulties of welding their immense country into a nation, in which all tribes and areas can work in unity. It understands, too, the difficulties inherent in the process of the democratic transfer of power. Its problem is, however, to secure popular support for a *rational* programme. And this problem is magnified a hundredfold through the competition for mass backing which is being waged between the rival Parties; for the masses in Nigeria, as elsewhere, are more easily stirred by appeals to emotion than to reason.

Our last week was spent in the east—in Iboland—where we were not such popular guests as we had been elsewhere. One would have needed weeks to break down the suspicion against us which had been engendered by the Zik press campaign. We could only do our best; and when we did meet the Ibo Union at Enugu, the proceedings began with some hard hitting, but ended in the greatest friendliness. We were also able to see, in the east, the famous communal development schemes at Udi (which were being filmed while we were there by the Crown Film Unit), the new oil mills, the coal mines with their good Government housing scheme, the prison and approved school, the hospital with its courageous African doctor struggling against severe odds and shortages, the railway workshops, and so on.

Unique Opportunity

This is the briefest bird's-eye view of our trip; in our next issue I will go on to discuss some of the problems now facing Nigeria. Here it only remains to say that I was conscious throughout of having a unique opportunity of seeing Nigeria through the eyes of *Africans*. Wherever we went we were accompanied by our African friends; we discussed with them what we had seen, and heard their own reactions. They were prepared to be completely frank with us. At the same time they surrounded us with warm-heartedness and a wealth of hospitality such as I have never known before. It clearly meant something to them that there were outside friends devoted to their interests and prepared to identify themselves with Nigerian problems. And to us, who in colonial eyes are born with the stigma of 'imperialism' about us, it meant a great deal to find that there were many Africans of the finest type who were prepared to believe in the sincerity of at least some white people.

One word of thanks to officialdom in Nigeria. All those whom we met—not least the Governor, Sir John Macpherson, and the Chief Secretary, Mr. Hugh Foot—could scarcely have been more friendly and helpful, more understanding of our

attitude towards Nigeria, or more willing that we should go everywhere and meet everyone. Their courtesy and tact was only rivalled by our friends in the Youth Movement, whom we can never thank sufficiently for their fellowship, confidence and generosity. One came away from Nigeria very

hopeful in the knowledge that the country was served by a group of men—African and European—who are equipped with the qualities to tide Nigeria over the difficult period in transition to self-government, which now assuredly lies before it.

TRINIDAD'S NEW CONSTITUTION

By

David Pitt

Dr. David Pitt is a Trinidadian, who supported the Minority proposals for the new constitution, which have been defeated in favour of a modified version of the Majority proposals. In the following article he analyses what the changes to be introduced really amount to, and what they are likely to mean to people in Trinidad. We do not necessarily share all his views (see Editorial comment), but they will probably be supported by many progressives in Trinidad.

On paper, the proposed new constitution will place Trinidad in advance of all other Colonies in the West Indies. But in practice the present situation will remain almost unchanged.

Analysis of the Changes

At present, the Governor is advised by an Executive Council of three officials, one nominated and four elected members of the Legislature appointed by him. He is obliged to consult them, but not to take their advice. There is a Legislative Council of three officials, six nominated members and nine elected members presided over by the Governor, who has a casting vote only.

In the proposed new constitution, the Executive Council will consist of three officials, one nominated member, and five elected members of the Legislature, elected by the whole Legislative Council, and removable by a two-thirds majority.

The Executive Council will be the principal instrument of policy and the Governor will be obliged to act on its advice subject to certain reserved powers in respect of good government, public order and public faith. These reserved powers are to be used at the instance of the Executive Council, but where the Executive Council refuses to authorise the Governor by resolution to use his reserved powers he may nevertheless do so if (except where urgency makes this impracticable) the Secretary of State's consent is first obtained.

The Legislative Council will consist of three officials, five nominated members and eighteen elected members, presided over by a Speaker appointed by the Governor from outside the Legislative Council. The Speaker will have neither a deliberative nor a casting vote.

At present, the Executive Council with the support of the nominated members pass all matters through the Legislative Council, regardless of the views of the majority of the elected members. Under the proposed new constitution, the Executive Council with the support of the nominated members and one elected member will be able to pass any motion through the Legislative Council regardless of the views of the majority of the elected members, who will have to be content to be as at present merely an opposition. The only change, therefore, is that the Executive Council will be one vote short in the Legislature, as a result of the reduction of the number of nominated members from six to five.

As the elected members of the Executive Council are to be elected by the whole Legislature and as there is a non-elected block of eight (three officials and five nominated members), the five elected members of the Executive Council will have to belong to a Party or Coalition which comprises fourteen of the eighteen elected members or will have to be acceptable to the combined official-nominated block. Since it is very difficult for any Party to win fourteen of the eighteen seats in any election (unless there is one slate) the probability is that the five elected members of the Executive Council will owe their presence in the Executive Council to the support of the official-nominated block, and the policies sponsored by them will be policies acceptable to that block. But, in as much as there will be a majority of elected members in both the Executive and Legislative Councils it will be said that decisions taken by the Trinidad Government are the decision of the

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The barometer is still set *Stormy*, but the gyroscope is steady, at least in the Commonwealth, which received its tribute 'more efficient than U.N.' from Sir Zafrullah Khan, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, on the 16th January, after the good news of peace in Kashmir. At New Delhi on the 25th January, Mr. Bandaranaike, Foreign Minister of Ceylon, proposed a common defence arrangement for India, Pakistan, Burma and Malayā, as like-minded territories who want only peace. In Johore, on the previous day, the British colonial territories held a Defence Co-ordination Committee. In Europe, the Union of the 16 nations is well in sight, around the original kernel of five. In America, Mr. Truman in his Inaugural, referred to Africa as one area (the other was Asia) for American capital development. Significantly, Africa was omitted from a 1946 survey of investment areas published by Wall Street. From Jamaica at the beginning of February, Lord Trefgarne announced his intention of going to the United States to negotiate a loan for the Colonial Development Corporation.

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Some people are alarmed by such news. But there really seems to be no need for alarm, assuming that we all want to survive. Sir Stafford Cripps has reiterated his 1935 statement that the 'liquidation of the British Empire is essential to Socialism.' Dean Acheson, the new American Secretary of State, has declared that the Truman programme is not 'to instal modern American plumbing throughout the world'—*sanitas sanitatum, omnis sanitas est*, the old prescription of the Anglo-Saxons for the Tropics. More significant than commerce or armies, in the long run, is the news that 1 in every 100 students at London University is reading an Oriental or African subject, with the total of 270 no less than four times what it was before the war. On an even wider front, rickshaws have at last been abolished in Singapore, even if only for 'trishaws'—bicycles drawing the passenger. This outrage was stopped in Nairobi a few years ago. Who knows its effects if stopped in Durban, where they had the recent riots?

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Africa last month illustrates the polarisation

of the great theme, freedom and organisation. In Nigeria, the Zik group have formed an Ibo State Union at Aba, and were, most significantly, congratulated by the Yoruba organisations further west. This perhaps points the way to Federalism, or at least Regionalism. (The 6th. Convention of the Trades Union Congress had already severed its connection with the Zikist National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons.) In the Gold Coast, the position is less clear: but even here an unofficial Constitutional Committee is sitting. In after years, historians may also note the tour of the Assistant Under-Secretary of State in charge of African Departments at the Colonial Office: Mr. Cohen has been three months in West Africa, and shown particular interest in local government and co-operatives.

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Over in East Africa, the emphasis is technical: the water-holes and dams dug and built in the last three years in quantities surpassing the last 15, a pioneer Nutrition School started in Kampala. The ground-nut scheme is to be greatly slowed down, in favour of transport and basic requirements. In Kenya, the Governor has foreshadowed drastic laws to secure better farming, which those on the spot know may be necessary, but nevertheless unpleasant. In Northern Rhodesia, the two principles, freedom and organisation, come up against each other: the local papers are demanding freehold for Europeans (and are incidentally engaged at their favourite task of attacking the 'Fabians.') The 'Fabians,' sc. any ignorant person who supports the viewpoint of materially backward peoples, were also attacked by the retiring Chief Native Commissioner in Southern Rhodesia, where there is a danger of some Matebele losing hereditary lands promised them in the Matopo Hills by Cecil Rhodes. Further south again, a 'delegation of humanitarian non-descripts' (i.e. they could not be called Fabian, but only Christian) approached the Commonwealth Relations Office, led by the Rev. Michael Scott, asking that the South African Protectorates

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should be put under the Colonial Office. Here ritual murders still darken the landscape, despite recent acquittals on grounds of law.

One shares the fears of Professor Arthur Lewis recently expressed to the Statistical Society at Manchester, 'meanwhile Colonial politicians listen with increasing distrust to talk about scaling down commodity prices, about using Colonial-earned dollars, and about exploiting the neglected Imperial estate to save the British skin, and wonder whether they will like the new public corporations any more than they liked the old private imperialism.' There is a danger of this 'managerial' movement making the world crisis its excuse, unchecked by its pace-maker, freedom. But the latter has not dropped out of the race, even though the effort to yoke the two is indeed difficult. Trinidad is the latest territory to achieve a new Constitution, with nine new elected members, making a total of 18 in a Legislative Council of 26, and a clear popular majority on the Executive. This is an advance on a Constitution granted as recently as 1946. In Jamaica, local politicians have met to consider revision of the 1944 arrangements. They agree on abolishing parish residence for a year as qualification for candidates, and on increasing the Lower House by two. No decision has been reached on the Upper House (the Legislative Council), which the Socialists want to abolish, nor on the Executive Council, which they want to increase. In Barbados, the Socialists under Grantley Adams have held their own against the Conservatives in recent elections.

There is other news from the Caribbean, perhaps less hopeful. Jamaica has refused to abandon the pound for the dollar, as proposed in the interests of wider Caribbean unity. At the same time, her attempts at floating two loans to support the ten-year plan have both failed. Her Government is attempting to attract new industries by abolishing import duty on pioneer plants, in-

cluding hotels, cinemas, and textiles. But although over two million dollars were made from the tourist trade in 1948, nearly that amount has been spent by Jamaican businessmen in the United States. Meanwhile the island has suffered a severe blow with the burning down of the plant that provides half the fats for the people.

The sudden return of Lord Baldwin from the Leewards, where he has apparently been introducing a whiff of a more spacious day, draws attention once again to the problem of small islands. In Malta and Cyprus, Sir Francis Douglas and Lord Winster have been facing very difficult situations indeed, and Lord Winster has had to resign his attempt to secure agreement for a new constitution among the 360,000 Greeks (although there is little trouble with the 80,000 Turks). Sir Francis Douglas has a less difficult racial problem, but an equally difficult political one, and he, or at least his Government, seems to have fallen for the bane of Governments, the too-independent editor. In the Seychelles, fresh from the fires of the Hong-Kong prison camps, Dr. Selwyn Clarke is still at grips with a small and vicious plantocracy. Mauritius yields to no other island in the problems of race and class, to which is now added a new outbreak of infantile paralysis. We may hope that Sir Hilary Blood, the new Governor, will be able to overcome these difficulties, of which much the easiest is the paralysis.

Marginalia

Fula headsmen are to teach Kuranko and Yalinka farmers in Farana Circle (French Guinea) how to raise and look after cattle.—(*West Africa*, January 22, 1949.)

When Mrs. Kuti was pleading the cause of Egba women in England, she was misunderstood and called names. She did not bulge an inch, but was working silently to awaken Egba womanhood.—(*Comet, Nigeria*, November 20, 1948.)

A prominent member of the Institute of Race Relations has suggested that efforts be made to persuade municipalities to break away from the custom of giving European names to native townships. . . The Natives often use names of their own such as Tulandivile (*Keep quiet, I've heard it all before*), Phefeni (*Tired old man*), and Mlamlankunzi (*One who stops a bull fight*).—(*South African News*, December, 1948.)

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representatives of the people, whereas those decisions will have been taken by a small minority of those representatives supporting a non-responsible and non-representative block of officials and nominated members and will probably have been opposed by the vast majority of the representatives of the people.

Moreover, in as much as removal from the Executive Council requires a two-thirds majority, any elected member of the Executive Council who is acceptable to the official-nominated block will be irremovable.

The Significance of the Proposals in Trinidad

At the present time, the people regard the government as something alien which must be fought. Members of the Legislative Council are elected not to govern but to fight the government, and elected members of the Legislature who are appointed to the Executive Council are very unpopular, and even those who before appointment were popular, soon lose that popularity. At the last general elections, three members of the Executive Council who sought re-election forfeited their deposits. The fourth did not seek re-election.

The need of the moment is a form of government which will strike a responsive chord and will secure the united co-operation of the people. It is manifest that this proposed new constitution will not do so, and will probably intensify the present situation.

The proposals come as a result of the Majority Report of a Committee appointed by the Governor in 1947, modified by the Legislative Council and by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. They constitute a rejection of a Minority Report recommending the immediate grant of responsible government.

From the moment this Committee was appointed, there was a public outcry against it on the grounds that it was packed with persons known to be opposed to the early grant of responsible government. Three of the elected members of the Legislature refused to serve, as did also the General Secretary of the T.U.C. The Committee held six meetings between March 5, 1947, and April 30, 1947. Then there was a delay of eleven months, and after that, without holding any further meetings, the Committee submitted its report in March, 1948.

As its meetings were held in public, its recommendations were known to the people from April, 1947, and were roundly condemned by them. The three municipalities and six of the seven County

Councils passed resolutions recommending the immediate grant of responsible government along the lines of the Minority Report. The Trade Union Council and all the Trade Unions individually passed similar resolutions. At public meetings held in all the main centres of population similar resolutions were passed. The Caribbean Labour Congress sponsored a meeting of all its affiliated organisations in Trinidad, and at that meeting a resolution endorsing the Minority Report was passed and the Secretary of State for the Colonies was asked to submit his proposals to a referendum, if it so happened that he found himself unable to accept the Minority Report. The Caribbean Labour Congress is an organisation of all the labour and trade union organisations in the West Indies except Butler's and Bustamante's, and it is the West Indian counterpart of the Labour Party.

Behind the Majority Report were the organs of big business, viz., the Petroleum Association of Trinidad, and the Agricultural Society. Only two of the nine elected members of the Legislature supported the Majority Report.

What has happened in Trinidad is a real tragedy.

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it is impossible to generalise about the application of this, British policy as recently stated in the House of Commons is to safeguard native lands in native hands. Subsistence agriculture with secure but varying individualisation of tenure is held to be basic to prosperity. For colonial development cash crops may be grown where there is sufficient land as in Jamaica or Fiji, subsidiary labour on plantations where land is short as in Barbados. In order to secure efficiency and education, native production should be geared to government, company or co-operative enterprise which will safeguard markets and prices.

Unfortunately the best plans for colonial development and landownership must depend in turn upon political stability, as well as gradual change in population and technical knowledge. The magnificently conceived Gezira plan for cotton development in the Sudan has ceased progress with the evolution of self-government. Individual *versus* tribal land tenure form the basis of political alignments in Samoa. Hope lies in well-ordered and advanced native communities such as the Tongans, and the Maoris of New Zealand who have evolved a joint stock development of tribal lands. In backward communities the problems of political turbulence and financial stringency have still to be met. Even in such old colonies as the West Indies the MacMillan Report points out that the lack of survey, of statistics, of information about land ownership is striking, and is due to poverty which neither allows for adequate government staff, nor for native land development. Everywhere we have to face to-day the double problem of freedom and efficient development which we know so well at home, as the main problem of our trusteeship over native lands and peoples.

LANDOWNERSHIP AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE COLONIES—II

By Molly Mortimer

It was pointed out in the last article that man cannot control, or create a social order, without first solving the vital problem of landownership and use. In particular, as Angelino in his great book 'Colonial Policy' observes: 'agrarian policy has a dominating significance, throughout the colonial world.' Most communities have always realised this and regarded their land as their most treasured possession. The Fijian tradition that the land belongs to the successive generations of its community is echoed by recent pronouncements in the British House of Commons. For it is not always realised that Western European treatment of land as an ordinary alienable and saleable commodity like any other is a modern and striking innovation in the history of the world.

The problem of how land may best be used and owned for the benefit of the individual and the community has occupied man's mind ever since Adam and Eve were ejected for not conforming to their terms of tenure in the Garden of Eden. To-day, in the colonial world there are three main questions to be considered: what degree of social control should there be over landholding? What type of tenure should be adopted? What is the relationship of landholding to economic development and social welfare?

Firstly, then, how far should a community control its land even at the expense of individual initiative, or how far may individuals be allowed to traffic in land or misuse it in the name of freedom, at the expense of the community. In colonial areas it has been found that a rigid maintenance of tribal control may prevent the native from adapting himself to the modern world. In Fiji, and there are similar examples in Africa, by the custom of *kere-kere*, a man is in honour bound to share all he has with his kin, and until a limited form of individual land tenure was permitted, no Fijian had any incentive to produce more than a minimum, since it would at once be swallowed up by more indolent relatives, who no longer feared the social pressure of primitive times. On the other hand individual ownership of land has led to wholesale loss of native lands to Europeans and Europeanised natives. It is one of the ironies of history that idealists like Raffles believed that individual landownership would set the people of India free from slavery to their lords, little realising that to a people not accustomed to individual landownership, it was merely a transfer from overlord

to money-lender landlord. The same idealistic hopes were proved equally wrong by Americans in Hawaii, where the land after being divided out among King, nobles and commons has rapidly gravitated into the hands of a very few American businessmen. Where population is dense, or the soil needs irrigation, the land itself must be protected against its people. There is a clear contrast here between the Philippines, where individual right has led to large-scale soil erosion, and Java, where by expert control, the Dutch have maintained the fertility and irrigation of a similar type of land, and maintained a far larger population on a better standard of life.

Customary tenure

The second problem to be faced is that even given an ideal form of tenure which will both protect the community and allow for individual development, it cannot be easily applied excepting in a new and empty country. Administrators have to face the problem of customary native systems of landholding which may not only be very complicated—in Ceylon it takes years of study for a lawyer to master the many issues involved—but may have conceptions alien to ours, the conception of redeemable sale, for instance, which is widely found in Africa and the Pacific. And since the question, how far should native customary land tenure be maintained, developed or replaced is the same as how far should native society be maintained, developed or replaced, it is one requiring considerable thought. Colonial policy has varied. The Americans in Hawaii and the Philippines have westernised both tenure and society as far as possible. British policy is to maintain and develop traditional forms as far as possible. If loss of land and social form has gone too far for maintenance, then in the adoption of modern forms of tenure a vast array of financial and litigious questions relating to survey and registration of title to land have to be considered, with all their opportunity for fraud and injustice. Land Commissions settling tiny claims in the Pacific Islands have sat for many years, and much of their work was incomplete when war broke out in 1939.

The third problem to be considered is the wider issue of the relationship of land tenure to economic development and social welfare—the problem of the dual mandate in terms of land. During the nineteenth century it was held that the highest point of economic efficiency was reached by plantation development under European control, and the very considerable richness of the Dutch East Indies has lent point to this view. It was not so clearly realised that the natives, landless and demoralised, tended to die rapidly of 'heart sickness' even when their physical conditions were endurable, and only the hardier Chinese and Indian who could at least look forward to a return to his own country and way of life survived. In the twentieth century it is recognised that the native cannot live adequately without his land, and in shaping his land tenure his whole future is being determined. While

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(Continued on page 8)

Guide to Books

The Sorcerer's Apprentice

By Elspeth Huxley. (Chatto & Windus. 18/-.)

If you are interested in East Africa but have never visited it, you can take a journey through its territories with Mrs. Huxley and ascertain what the landscape looks like, what peoples live there, what problems they face and what may be the remedies for their ills. Local personalities are, one by one, brought upon the scene and in the end you may be left wondering what kind of a job the white man and the African, together with the Arab and the immigrant Indian, are making of present-day East Africa. You will learn of the 'groundnutters' problems, the ravages of the tsetse fly and the fact that earliest man came from Kenya.

This book is, however, no mere travelogue. Mrs. Huxley has diligently sought both the opinions of officials and ordinary people in order to make her survey more accurate and complete.

A book like this is needed in Britain where people are becoming increasingly interested in colonies and their inhabitants. It will give them intelligent information without the strain of having to absorb it through the ponderous medium of official reports. But the African reader may not like all that is there. He may think the white man is painted in too favourable a light, as Mrs. Huxley proceeds through Kenya, Tanganyika, Zanzibar and Uganda.

The educated African is now on the march for his own particular 'national home.' The Sorcerer's apprentice is progressing but his steps are still erratic and at this juncture, while he still tries his prentice hand, he might slip back almost as easily as go forward. One day, however, he will fashion a new Africa. Mrs. Huxley believes this will be so.

O. R. C.

Congratulations

Some months ago we expressed the opinion that a series of talks on *Commonwealth and Empire* then being given by the B.B.C. were 'a sad waste of a useful opportunity.' We are all the more glad, therefore, to congratulate those responsible for the series on colonial affairs now running under the title, *Enterprise and Achievement*. These, in contrast to the former talks, have really tackled the discussion of basic problems, and have accordingly been well worth while listening to. It is probable that they may attract a smaller total number of listeners. But we venture to think that these will really be given food for thought—and that this is a more desirable objective than the serving-up of superficialities and sentimentalities to a larger audience.

J. F. H.

Impressions of Travel

By S. G. Watson. (Africa's Own Library. No. 19. Lutterworth Press. 1/6d.)

The author, 'a retired African civil servant whose home is on the Gold Coast,' is an eager traveller and tells his story well. His present book gives an account of his adventurous trip to Mopti (French Sudan) in 1934 and then of his seven months' tour in 1938-39 to South Africa, thence to England, across the Channel to France, Switzerland, Italy, back to England and finally home to the Gold Coast.

D. D.

SHORT NOTICES

Commonwealth Handbook

(Royal Empire Society, London, W.C.2. 1/6d.)

An excellent guide 'to the Government Departments concerned with Dominion and Colonial Affairs, to the offices of the High Commissioners and other official representatives of Empire territories, to Colonial training and other specialised courses in universities, and to many societies which are either directly concerned with Imperial affairs in general or in some specialised field or are closely related thereto.' The Handbook also includes a list of Empire journals published in this country. A valuable reference book which fills a gap.

Corona

Vol. 1, No. 1. (Monthly 1/-. Annual postal subscription 14/-. H.M.S.O., Box 569, London, S.E.1.)

This new 'Journal of His Majesty's Colonial Service' is intended for 'British administrators overseas.' The editor, Mr. Kenneth Bradley, has produced an informative and entertaining first number.

Focus, 1948

(City Printery Ltd., 67, Slipe Road, Cross Roads P.O., Jamaica, West Indies. 7/6d.)

A book of short stories, poems, legends and plays by Jamaican writers, edited by Edna Manley and 'published as a co-operative effort by and on behalf of the contributors. *Focus* makes a welcome re-appearance. 'Five years ago when the first *Focus* was published we had hoped to make it a yearly event,' writes the editor. Many difficulties, among them lack of funds, delayed further publication until 1948. Subscriptions may be sent to the Editor of *Focus*, address as above.

Parliament

House of Commons Debates Jamaica

The most satisfactory Colonial debates are always those which concentrate on one limited subject or country. Members are then able to get their teeth into the matter, and the Minister is able to reply with something more useful than a series of vague generalities about fifty different territories. The debate on Jamaica which took place in Parliament on February 4, was no exception to this rule. Tom Driberg, who had recently visited Jamaica, proposed the motion, and presented a pretty disturbing picture of social conditions in that island. He spoke of nearly a third of the population being illiterate; of 68 per cent. of the babies born in 1946 being illegitimate; of about 70,000 unemployed; of a continuation of racial discrimination in the Jamaica Battalion; about money being spent on the most luxurious hotels, when hundreds of thousands of people were still living in the most wretched slums imaginable. He spoke also of the problems of securing good agricultural practices among farmers, of the failure of settlement schemes based on individual holdings, of jobbery and corruption in public life, and the lack of a sense of social responsibility among the general population. No one, in the Debate that followed, least of all Mr. Creech Jones in his reply, attempted to deny the seriousness of Jamaica's problems. But both Mr. Driberg himself, and the Secretary of State in summing up, recognised that the burden of responsibility no longer lay with Britain. Jamaica now had its own more or less responsible Government and the tragedy of the position was, as Mr. Driberg put it, that 'the present government of Jamaica is not one which believes in the control of investment, in Excess Profits Tax, in cost of living subsidies or in other such measures to which we have grown accustomed in this country.'

Mr. Creech Jones described the economic and social assistance which Britain was still giving to Jamaica. He lent his 'complete support' to the plea put forward by Michael Foot for the continuation of bulk purchase and of long-term contracts for Colonial produce. He talked of the possibilities of stimulating new industries through the Colonial Development Corporation and promised to inquire fully into the charges of race discrimination in the Jamaica Battalion. He also reported that a Registrar would be appointed for a new Co-operative Department and a new Co-operative Ordinance would be put into effect. But he stressed that something would have to be done in the West Indies in order to encourage a proper sense of social responsibility. Public opinion would have to be stimulated as regards family planning, because the uncontrolled increase in population had become a menace to the West Indies, for which no economic solution so far proposed could provide the answer. He also stressed the importance of pressing forward with the federation of the West Indies by which means far better economic planning,

and far better use of resources could at last become possible.

Perhaps Mr. Driberg was right when he said that the troubles in Jamaica might arise 'because constitutional reform has not been synchronised with economic and social reform and political education. I am not saying,' he added, 'that constitutional reform and partial self-government came too fast. I am saying that the others have lagged behind too far.' That is the great problem to-day. The public mood is such that constitutional reform cannot come too fast, but political education still lags behind in too many places. To-day those conscientious Members of the British Parliament, who worked for Jamaican self-government, can do little more than watch, rather unhappily, while a demagogic government fumbles painfully with the massive social problems which have, in a large measure, been inherited from past British neglect. It is a difficult transition period, but as Mr. Driberg said in the Debate, 'nobody would suggest reversing the process. On the contrary they must make their own mistakes and I hope, learn from them.'

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of *Venture*.

SIR,—The comment on Nigerian politics by *Venturer* in your February issue is definitely unfortunate. I have no wish to take sides between the Ibo and the Yoruba, the National Council and the Youth Movement, but it is less than fair to suggest that while the National Council is racial, the Youth Movement is non-racial and that there are no thoughtful politicians in the National Council at all. Unfortunately in Nigeria to-day both these organisations have become linked with tribal differences. It is probably true that 'all the more thoughtful' Yorubas belong to the Youth Movement, but certainly all the more thoughtful Ibos do not. At all events, the journal of the Fabian Colonial Bureau should avoid clumsy references to colonial political parties, which may only stir up still further the already embittered political strife.

NIGERIAN.

(The feature Compass Points by *Venturer* is written by a Special Correspondent, who has been given a free hand and whose views are entirely his own. The Bureau's point of view is expressed month by month in our Editorial features. It may interest readers to compare this letter by 'Nigerian' with the article by Rita Hinden on p. 3.—EDITOR.)

Cyrene Mission Paintings

by

Tirzah Ravilious

About five years ago the Reverend E. G. Paterson was presented with a farm of twelve thousand acres not far from Bulawayo in Rhodesia. Here he started a mission school with a particular interest in art. His pupils were mostly straight from the bush and this exhibition was the result, held at the gallery of the Royal Society of Water-colour Painters in Conduit Street.

Mr. Paterson says that most of his students had never seen a picture and it is interesting that the exhibition was sharply divided into two groups.

The first of these were the primitive paintings done in the now familiar powder colours used by our children. This group I found particularly enjoyable, because of their instinctive sense of colour and pattern, and I think in this respect they are better than the average European children's paintings. My favourite, an unidentifiable animal walking with a green snake before a purple tree, by John Sibande, had a note under his name saying that being very short sighted he was uninfluenced by the other students. The second group comprised the majority of the hung pictures. They were mostly ink and water drawings in flat pattern, and illustrated literary scenes with figures and animals in a landscape background. Though some of them had lovely titles like *The Beauty of my Home* and *Laughing Day* their general effect was rather monotonous and dull in colour, and one missed the delicacy and tenderness of the Indian and Persian paintings that they very much resembled. I liked very much Livingstone Sango's *Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins* with its charming sky full of large stars, and Joseph Mohlovu's *Death of Lobengula, King of the Matabele*. (His pictures looked as though they had been sponged which gave them a subdued and romantic quality.) I should have liked the King to have been slightly darker in tone in this otherwise excellent picture.

Mr. Paterson must be congratulated on an exhibition beautifully free from Western tradition and which obviously has given tremendous pleasure to the performers.

Activities of the Bureau

Report on Nigeria

A public meeting was held at the Mary Sumner Hall, Westminster, on Monday, February 14, when Mr. R. Sorensen, M.P., and Dr. Rita Hinden spoke on their visit to Nigeria. There was an excellent gathering—about half of which was composed of Africans. Mr. Frank Horrabin, Chairman of the Bureau, presided.

* * *

South-West Africa

The Bureau is participating in a deputation to Mr. Philip Noel-Baker, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, on the question of the British Government's attitude to the closer association of South-West Africa with the Union of South Africa. It will be remembered that South Africa's refusal to present a trusteeship agreement for South-West Africa was condemned by a large majority of the general assembly of the United Nations on no fewer than three separate occasions. The British representative failed, however, to take a clear line in criticism of South Africa's defiance of the United Nations. The purpose of the deputation to Mr. Noel-Baker is to challenge the negative attitude adopted by the British Government. The deputation will consist of Members of Parliament of different political Parties, the Anti-Slavery Society, the League of Coloured Peoples, the Friends Native Races Committee, and representatives of some of the churches, in addition to representatives from the Bureau. Rev. Michael Scott will also participate in this deputation.

* * *

Forthcoming pamphlet

A short pamphlet is to be published by the Bureau next month under the title "Friendship and Empire." It has been written by Dr. J. B. Danquah of the Gold Coast and contains some of his impressions of the Africa Conference held in London last October. The price of English edition is 6d. (7d. post free).

For Reference

March, 1949

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